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Public Information Office: +93 (0)70-234-236 x4454

E-mail: kabulusaidinformation@usaid.gov

http://afghanistan.usaid.gov

FACT SHEET

Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP)

OVERVIEW

Afghanistan is confronting a severe challenge in diagnosing and controlling disease outbreaks. The country lacks sufficient medical personnel with backgrounds in epidemiology and faces high rates of infectious disease transmission. Many of these diseases can be passed from animals to humans (zoonotic diseases), which is a significant threat in a country where livestock production is a major source of income and food for farmers and their families.

In response to a request from the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to build capacity for epidemiology in 2008, USAID is funding the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) in Afghanistan. The two-year program is designed to build the capacity of entry- and mid-level health professionals in applied epidemiology, surveillance, and enhanced public health practices. In particular, the program will focus on priority zoonotic diseases including anthrax, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, brucellosis, rabies, plague, and tuberculosis, in cooperation with animal health partners at the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL).

Through this program, the MoPH and the MAIL will acquire the means to build their own programs and capacity to improve public health on local, regional, and national levels, ultimately leading to improved health on a global scale.

ACTIVITIES

- Develop a comprehensive training program for infectious disease monitoring and control
- Enable Afghan health professionals to study at the established FETP in Pakistan

RESULTS

- Conducted a general course in basic epidemiology for 19 MoPH staff
- Trained approximately 70 Afghans, including national health program managers, medical officers, surveillance officers, veterinarians, and laboratory technicians, on principles of outbreak investigation and disease surveillance
- Trained two Afghans from the Afghanistan Public Health Institute through a four-month introductory course in Pakistan that included epidemiology, biostatistics, surveillance, and scientific communications